

## The Tiny Teacher

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The story of an ant's life is too remarkable to be true. An ant is the smallest and the wisest creature that we have seen.

Ants have comfortable homes. Each home has hundreds of little rooms and passages. In some of these rooms the queen ant lays eggs. Others are nurseries for the young ants. Workers have their reserved quarters. Some rooms serve as storehouses for food. Soldiers have separate barracks. Ants in a house never quarrel with each other.

Each ant does its share of work intelligently and bravely. So the ants lead a very peaceful life. We know so many other facts about ant's life. People have kept ants as pets. They have watched their daily behaviour closely. An ant uses its feelers or antennae to talk to or to greet other ants. There are many kinds of ants. The commonest among them are the black or red ones.

The queen ant is the mother of the entire population of ants of a colony. It has a pair of wings. After its wedding flight, it gets rid of its wings. After that it does nothing but lay eggs. Eggs hatch and grubs come out. Grubs take two or three weeks to become cocoons. Cocoons take three more weeks to become perfect ants. Thus it takes five or six weeks for a grub to become a complete ant.

When the eggs become grubs, soldiers guard them. Worker ants carry the grubs about for airing, exercise and sunshine. New ants are trained for the jobs of workers like soldiers, builders, cleaners etc. After a few weeks' training, the small ants are ready to go out for work.

Creatures other than the ants also live in the anthill. These are beetles, lesser breed of ants and the greenfly. Some of them give smell pleasant to the ants; others give various juices, and some are just pets or playthings. The ants train greenfly to give honeydew. They milk it just as we milk the cow.

Man can learn many things from the ant, the "tiny teacher". Hard work, sense of duty, discipline, cleanliness and care for the young ones are some of them. Above all an ant has firm loyalty to the land where it lives. Hard work is easy to see as each ant does its duty most regularly. Sense of duty and discipline are the most important qualities of an ant's life. That is why, the ants of a colony are never

seen to fight each other. All ants together take care of the young ones. Queen ant lays the eggs and soldiers guard the grubs. Workers feed and clean them. They also carry them about for airing, exercise and sunshine. New ants are taught by the old ones.